MANAGING CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS

Practical ways to handle disagreements at home, at work and with friends

BE HARD ON THE PROBLEM — NOT THE PERSON.

Work together to address the issue without turning on each other.

Conflict is part of being in relationships. The aim is not to win every argument.
Focus on the issue, stay respectful, and look for a way forward.

PAUSE BEFORE YOU REACT

Notice when your emotions are rising. Take a breath, slow your voice or suggest a short break before responding.

GET CLEAR ON THE REAL ISSUE

Ask yourself what is actually bothering you. Separate the main problem from old frustrations or side arguments.

LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

Let the other person explain their view. Ask a question to check you have understood, even when you disagree.

BE HONEST WITHOUT ATTACKING

Talk about the issue and its effect on you. Use clear, specific words rather than blame, insults or sweeping statements.

BE HARD ON THE PROBLEM

Treat the problem as something you can tackle together. Avoid making the other person the enemy; look for a fair, workable solution.

KNOW WHEN TO STEP BACK

If the conversation is going nowhere, agree to return to it later. Set clear boundaries and seek support when needed.

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

Disagreement is not the same as intimidation, bullying or abuse. You do not have to stay in an unsafe situation or compromise your safety just to resolve a conflict.

MAKE IT REAL THIS WEEK

Choose one tension. Write down the problem without blame, then plan one respectful step towards addressing it.

A THOUGHT TO TAKE WITH YOU

“Remember that people act according to what seems right to them.”

Adapted from Epictetus, The Enchiridion, Chapter 42

A LIGHTER THOUGHT

“I came prepared to listen. I just didn’t expect to hear myself so much.”

A little room for a laugh — especially at ourselves.